**Getting it Right the 1st Time**

How did LCC replace a four 5-credit pre-college math course sequence with a three 5-credit pre-college math course sequence without stressing the students? The answer is simple, we eliminated redundancy. The result is that the new sequence is actually less stressful than it was before.

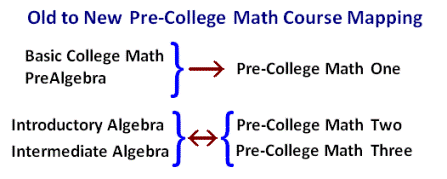
Of course, the redundancy referred to is commonly called the Spiral Teaching Method. Answers.com states, "Spiral Teaching means to keep moving upward, but also keep returning to the fundamentals - almost as though you are constantly reviewing but adding more to the pile as you go." The advantage to spiral teaching is obvious. The 2nd (or 3rd) time a student is exposed to a particular concept, that concept will become more and more familiar and comfortable.

Unfortunately, our old pre-college sequence exploited this one advantage of spiral teaching without considering its numerous disadvantages. Spiral Teaching may make a lot of sense at the high school level, where the term for a math courses are typically a school year. There simply is far more time to spend on each objective. When the term for that same course is 10 weeks, the pace becomes frantic to cover all the redundant objectives.

A proponent might claim that the big payoff occurs when a particular objective is covered the 2nd time. However, this claim ignores a glaring disadvantage: many students will fail due to the intense pace and never see these subjects a 2nd time, unless they repeat the same course.

So LCC's new pre-college sequence will focus on objectives one at a time, at a much more relaxed pace. In addition, some students will actually finish the sequence in less time.

The mapping of the old pre-college sequence to the new sequence is roughly shown below:



Basic College Math and PreAlgebra contained so much overlap that they were essentially combined into Introductory Algebra One. Introductory Algebra and Intermediate Algebra were combined to form the new Introductory Algebra Two and the Introductory Algebra Three.

In the old sequence, there was a huge divide between PreAlgebra and Introductory Algebra (Math092). Math092 was very intense and had by far the greatest failure rate. The objectives in Math092 were about 1 ½ weeks of review, and then 8 ½ weeks of mostly new material at an intense pace. Math092 was followed by the old Math099 (Intermediate Algebra), which was 60% to 65% review of what was covered in the old Math092. Due to all the review, plus the significant new objectives, the old Math099 also required an intense pace.

For the new sequence, the objectives of the old Math092 and the new objectives of the old Math099 were combined into one set of objectives that now spread over nine 2 week modules. There also is a new module devoted entirely to learning how to approach and do word problems.

So far, as expected, the new classes are done at a more relaxed and comfortable pace. We are very optimistic that the new curriculum, coupled with how this new curriculum is organized and supported, will be very beneficial to the students.